



TASK FORCE LIBERTY

Press Release

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FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq – Task Force Liberty

Soldiers and our Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) partners continue to defend the Iraqi people, blunting terror tactics while striking at insurgents' organization, supply lines, assembly areas and leadership. These operations to degrade terrorists' structure are leveraged alongside operations that upgrade infrastructure for the benefit of the Iraqi people.

Coalition Forces and Iraqi soldiers continue to improve our abilities to find IEDs and unexploded ordnance (UXOs) before they can be used against themselves or Iraqi civilians. In Kirkuk, Northern Oil Company security forces discovered unexploded ordnance while patrolling its area on May 13. The security forces and Coalition Forces conducted a further inspection of the area and discovered several large caches in the area. The caches, located within 300 meters of each other, were destroyed. Further on down the pipeline near Bayji, an alert Oil Security Battalion noticed a bomb May 13. The security forces notified their superiors to remove the bomb and take it to a base for destruction.

While this proactive, successful defense against terrorism, goes on, ISF and Task Force Liberty Soldiers continue operations to hit terrorists wherever they hide, capturing them and their supplies in raids or at checkpoints. Soldiers of the 1st Iraqi Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Division and Task Force Liberty Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor detained four insurgents recently in Udaim in Salah Ad Din Province. The brigade's 2nd Battalion in the past two weeks established a flash checkpoint as part of an independent search operation. The checkpoint is a fast, effective tool used by the Iraqi army to search individuals and cars.



While checkpoints capture insurgents, Task Force Liberty and Iraqi army soldiers continue to cast their nets over ever-widening areas in North Central Iraq to deny insurgents use of a unique terrain feature – riverbeds. In Uroba, Iraqi army soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Division and Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 116th Armor trained on squad-level dismounted patrol techniques along riverbeds May 10.

In addition to capturing insurgents, interdicting terrorist activities and advancing their training to become a more effective force, Iraqi army soldiers and police are solidifying their already successful partnership with the Iraqi people. Aruba police rescued two sisters, the victims of a kidnapping, on May 14. Iraqi police received information about the kidnapping and conducted a search of the area. Police located the women unharmed and took three men into custody. Police charged two of the men with kidnapping and the third, the brother of the women, faces kidnapping and murder charges. Police accuse him of killing his brother before taking his sisters hostage.

Task Force Liberty Soldiers from 116th Brigade Combat Team's Staff Judge Advocate office trained the officers and leaders of the Iraqi 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Division on the Law of War, May 8 in Al Wasity in Kirkuk Province. The training was designed to enhance staff cohesion and individual office knowledge.

These operations - offensive action and programs designed to foster already growing community support are considered the keys to a safe and stable Iraq.

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

In the last two weeks, operations in the Task Force Liberty area of operations have resulted in an estimated 18 anti-Iraqi forces killed, 2 wounded, and 586 detained. Significant ammunition seized included 4,305 rockets, mortar, artillery and tank rounds, 378 small arms weapons and grenades, 4,052 rounds of small arms ammunition, 32 mines, 155 rocket propelled grenade launchers, and 51 rocket propelled grenades. Major equipment found include three sniper rifles, 14,844 anti-aircraft rounds, 844 assorted fuses, and 594 pounds of explosives. Task Force Liberty operations also seized \$3,422 U.S. currency and 3,420,000 Iraqi Dinars. Within the Division's area of responsibility, 74



improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were discovered prior to detonation, preventing the loss of life at the hands of anti-Iraqi forces.

1st Brigade Combat Team (Raider). Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division from Fort Stewart, Georgia, continue to expand their partnership with Iraqi Security Forces, bringing security to the people of North Central Iraq.

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry near Balad provided combat lifesaver training to Iraqi soldiers on May 4 at Forward Operating Base O’Ryan. The Iraqis received training to administer intravenous fluids, treat minor injuries and help medical personnel triage patients for care. The training from the 1-128 medics provide the Iraqi soldiers with increased confidence in their own capabilities.

Training like this is helping the Iraqi Army come into its own – a force capable of independent, unit-level action. 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldiers have been working with Iraqi soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division to improve their warrior skills for the past two months in Salah Ad Din Province. The Iraqi 1st Battalion now carries out its own missions with minimal oversight from Raider Soldiers. Through the efforts of the 1st Battalion, Iraqi and Coalition Forces recently captured two wanted terrorists in the region.

Iraqi Army Soldiers from 1st Battalion’s Company C and the 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor conducted a joint raid in which, for the first time, the Iraqi commander was responsible for tracking the movements of his soldiers and the Coalition Forces. In the past, Coalition Force commanders were responsible for moving all the combat units.

Iraqi platoons from the Iraqi 2nd Battalion conducted urban training in preparation for running joint combat patrols with partner companies of 1st BCT’s 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor near Samarra. Joint combat patrols provide the companies with real-time experience.

3rd Brigade Combat Team (Sledgehammer). The battalion task forces in the “Sledgehammer” Brigade Combat Team from Fort Benning, Georgia continue their work to bring peace and stability to Diyala Province.

Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade leveraged their technology capabilities to introduce Diyala Provincial Governor Ra’ad Rashid to the world on May 19. The Governor



conducted interviews with the Lebanon-based Al Hurra satellite TV network as well as American audiences with CBS, ABC and NBC news. Governor Ra'ad spoke about security in Diyala saying that he feels that the recent car bombing attacks in Diyala are desperate acts conducted by terrorists with "no vision for the future." Governor Ra'ad expressed his confidence in the Iraqi Provincial Police and the 2nd Iraqi Army Brigade who have conducted seven brigade level independent operations in the last two months.

When asked about sectarian or ethnic strife, Governor Ra'ad pointed out that the newly elected Diyala Provincial Council includes Arab, Kurds and Turkomen men and women who are Sunni, Shi'ite and Christian. Governor Ra'ad stated that the "Iraqi people are united, and their unity is like a concrete wall that no one can break."

Elsewhere in Diyala Province, leaders in the town of Hamrin conducted a meeting to discuss the upcoming election in which a mayor and city council will be chosen. The leaders agreed to hold the election on June 16 to organize the event on the same lines as January's national election. Each sheik agreed to return to his tribe and recruit quality individuals to run for office. Task Force Liberty forces will provide security on election day, finance the administration of the election and facilitate its organization but the people of Hamrin will be responsible for the election's execution.

In Baqubah, Soldiers from Task Force 1-10 Infantry and Iraqi police special weapons and tactics teams conducted weapons training at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Gabe. This was one of the first times that members of the Iraqi police team had fired their sidearms for training. Weapons training such as this allows the Iraqi police to gain confidence in their ability use their weapons with accuracy.

In Task Force 2-69 Armor's area of operations, Soldiers completed a joint village assessment of the town of Al Hawali in the Hamreen Mountains. This was the first visit from Coalition Forces and the Iraqi army to Hawali. During the visit, emphasis was placed on local village leaders to use their local government (the Udaim Council) to take care of the needs of this small village.



116th Brigade Combat Team (Warrior). The 116th Brigade Combat Team area of operation, which consists of Kirkuk and As Sulaymaniyah Provinces, has seen sustained progress toward establishing and improving security, economic development, governance and communication in the past weeks.

The Iraqi army partners of the 116th BCT continue to demonstrate its growing effectiveness and independence in operations. The Iraqi army conducted several successful raids in the area. In the coming weeks, the 116th BCT will be turning security operations over to Iraqi control in selected portions of its area of operations. The Iraqi army's newly-established Base Support Unit established itself at an Iraqi facility near Kirkuk on May 8. The Iraqi 4th Division's 2nd Brigade Headquarters also moved to the installation May 12. Task Force 1-148th Field Artillery assisted in training the 2nd Iraqi Army Brigade staff, as well helping them move to their new headquarters building. The facility's training center also graduated 200 new Iraqi army soldiers from their basic training May 14.

Iraqi police leadership in Kirkuk took their first step toward local fiscal control by meeting with the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad and returning to Kirkuk to educate their primary staff to explain the budgetary processes to each police chief in the province.

The 116th BCT has continued to see activity in construction, agriculture, business and other economic areas the past two weeks. Kirkuk's Director General of Water has reported above-average water flow from Lake Dokan to the farms of the region the past two weeks. The Rezgary Health Clinic is near completion. The 116th BCT continues to work with local officials on the Kirkuk Regional Water and Landfill Projects. A conference for reconstruction contracts attracted over 200 interested parties at the Kirkuk government building May 18.

The 116th BCT's leadership continues working with local government officials as they work toward establishing their new democracy. The Kirkuk Provincial Council held a press conference May 17 to discuss progress of negotiations that are ongoing as the leadership and various committees form. Council members met May 19 to continue negotiations. Members are committed to a council that fairly represents all the people of



the province. Brigade and Task Force leaders continued meeting with local political, religious and tribal leaders to talk about important issues.

278th Regimental Combat Team (The Volunteers). The 278th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) from the Tennessee Army National Guard continues joint operations and training of Iraqi Security forces as they take on more responsibility for security and stability in Iraq.

The Iraqi police are demonstrating newfound confidence in themselves and their ability as protectors of their people. On May 4, the Iraqi police and Soldiers from L Troop, 3rd Squadron, 278th RCT established a temporary Traffic Control Point (TCP) in front of the As Sadiyah city council building to slow vehicle traffic during a city council meeting. With a show of strength, Iraqi police stopped a local resident trying to force his vehicle past the TCP. Other Iraqi police and army soldiers quickly helped secure the scene and explain to the driver the purpose of the TCP and why his cooperation is important.

On May 6, Iraqi soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Division took the lead in a joint raid with soldiers from the Scout Platoon, 2nd Squadron, 278th RCT, on a suspected munitions dealer's house and cache site. The mission captured the dealer supplying roadside bomb-making material to a cell in Yanijah. The raid resulted in six detainees captured and the seizure of three RPG Launchers, one IED, Demolition cord, C-4 explosives, three Sniper Rifles and ammunition and \$300 (US).

On May 7, Soldiers from 1st Squadron visited the five remote villages of Salman Sammu, Ruhem Humsor, Kharbut and Gazi Arabi to provide medical treatment and improve the local infrastructure. In each village the local children were given toys and villagers received supplies. In this rural area of the Balad Ruz district, a bridge repair project is planned that will benefit all five villages.

42nd Aviation Brigade (Eagle). Soldiers and aircrews of the 42nd Infantry Division's Aviation Brigade continue operations as the wings of Task Force Liberty. Recent activities include combat missions in support of the brigade combat teams and the implementation of a new maintenance program for the Blackhawk helicopters.



Aircrews of the 8-229th Attack Helicopter Battalion and the 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry assisted the division with aerial reconnaissance and supporting fires. In more than six different combat missions in support of the entire division's area of operation, the Apache and Kiowa Warrior helicopters flew a combined total of more than 1,400 combat flying hours.

Task Force Liberty lift assets – the aircraft and crews of the 1-140th and 1-150th General Support Aviation Battalions – continued their efforts to support the division, flying more than 700 hours in support of Soldiers in the field. Recently the aircrews transported some special guests: Ambassadors of Hollywood (including Dean Cain of Superman fame) and country and western singer Toby Keith. Both flights represented exceptional opportunities to bring morale boosting entertainment to the troops.

Operating in the harsh environment here in Iraq, the two UH-60 battalions recently implemented a change in their maintenance plans. The new program is designed to improve the maintenance posture of the units in the long term with a minimal effect on operational readiness in the short. Although only a few weeks into the full implementation, the initial results for aviation readiness rates are quite good.

Division Artillery (Thunder). 42nd Division Artillery (Divarty) Soldiers continue with their mission of force protection. Radar crews across North Central Iraq continue to assist combat patrols with points of origin for insurgent indirect fire attacks while counterfire artillery units continue their efforts to destroy the terrorists before the next round can be fired.

Division Engineers (Detonator). Task Force Trailblazer of the 467th Engineer Battalion continues to hunt for IEDs along main roads in order to maintain mobility throughout Task Force Liberty's area of operations and ensure the safety of Iraqi motorists. Soldiers from the 793rd Engineer Detachment (Utility) and Company C, 983rd Engineer Battalion continue to improve the force protection and quality of life for Task Force Liberty Soldiers, including plumbing and electrical upgrades. These same soldiers are also providing valuable assistance in the closure and relocation of several forward operating bases in the area of operations.

Engineer Brigade Soldiers continue to work with the Iraqi Ministries of Power,



Buildings-Health & Education, Security & Justice, and Oil to ensure the success of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the critical infrastructure facilities in the cities of Bayji, Kirkuk and As Sulaymaniyah. 42nd Brigade Engineers will continue to operate across the area of operations in support of our Soldiers and the Iraqi people, to ensure complete mission success of the 42nd Infantry Division.

Division Support Command (Muleskinner). Division Support Command (DISCOM) supports the continuing growth of the Iraqi Security Forces, including army, police and border patrol units. The DISCOM material management center ensures the combat brigades are supported in all classes of supply. This includes very specific types of ammunition expended during combat operations. The ammunition section successfully supplied sufficient illumination artillery rounds to support fire missions throughout the area of operations.

The material management center built a cell solely for issuing supplies and equipment to Iraqi Security Forces. In the last two weeks, this section supplied the 116th in Kirkuk and As Sulaymaniyah and the 3rd BCT in Diyala the equipment required to field multiple army battalions for the Iraqi army. The equipment and property to be issued is received, inventoried and staged for shipping or supply point pick-up. The equipment ranges from individual helmets and gear to the large 7.5 Ton Kraz Russian cargo truck.

The movement control officer, working along side the division transportation officer and the 18th Airborne Corps movement section, schedules and tracks all movement within North Central Iraq. These include combat logistics patrols that support the 42nd Infantry Division and other combat movements that pass through our area. The combat logistics patrols moving critical supplies over the last two weeks were record breakers for the 42nd DISCOM. More than 325 patrols moved throughout the area of operation during this period. Since operations began for DISCOM, the movement control office has overseen 866 ground movement operations and another 546 air movements.

The 50th Main Support Battalion has driven throughout North Central Iraq in support of the division. The MSB supports the BCT's through scheduled resupply patrols and delivers all unit requirements, from water to ammunition to repair parts. The MSB has



logged more than 675,000 miles on Iraq's road network, more than double its predecessor. The battalion's heavy equipment transport platoon just completed a four day mission out of sector, moving the 983rd Engineer Battalion's equipment from Tikrit to Ramadi.

Conclusion

Task Force Liberty and our Iraqi Security Force partners continue to help provide a safe and secure Iraq. Events of the recent weeks have shown that the insurgency is resilient and determined to uproot the newly seated government. We continue our work with the Iraqi Security Forces to neutralize that insurgency. We train, coach and support the Iraqi Security Forces as they continue to grow their own capabilities to defeat the insurgency and improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people. We believe in the future of Iraq. To our families, friends, employers and the American people, Task Force Liberty thanks you for your steadfast support and encouragement.

Never Forget!

For more information on the 42nd Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty:

www.42id.army.mil
